

Message Text

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SUBJ: MARINE SECURITY GUARD QUARTERS, MEXICO CITY

PANAMA FOR CO, D COMPANY, USMC, AND RSS.

1. SINCE EARLY 1971 DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LOCATION OF THE HOUSE LEASED UNDER CONTRACT 5128-410052 FBO FOR THE MEXICO CITY MSG DETACHMENT HAS RISEN IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE EVER-INCREASING CONGESTION ON URBAN ROADWAYS CAUSED BY THE CITY'S EXPANDING POPULATION. TO WIT: IT NOW TAKES 45 MINUTES ON THE AVERAGE TO TRANSIT THE FASTEST ROUTE BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND THE CHANCERY DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS. THE SAME ONE-WAY TRIP TOOK ABOUT 20 MINUTES WHEN THE HOUSE WAS FIRST LEASED IN 1966. NOW, TO COMPOUND THIS PROBLEM, THE MEXICO CITY DETACHMENT IS TO BE AUGMENTED BY TWO WATCHSTANDERS (STATE 38248) AND THE FACILITIES OF THE HOUSE ARE SCARCELY ADEQUATE FOR THE TEN MEN WHO CURRENTLY LIVE THERE. FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER EXTENSIVE WORK BY THE EMBASSY MAINTENANCE STAFF AND AT CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE TO THE LESSOR, THE HOT WATER SYSTEM BARELY MEETS EXISTING DEMAND. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE JUST LEARNED OF POTENTIALLY SERIOUS PROBLEMS INVOLVING BACKUP OF THE HOUSE'S SEWAGE/CESSPOOL SYSTEM.

2. SINCE SUMMER 1973, AT THE URGING OF THE RSO AND WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE CO, CO. D., AND SOLELY ON THE GROUNDS OF OPERATIONAL NECESSITY, WE HAVE BEEN CARRYING ON A SEARCH FOR QUARTERS CLOSER TO THE CHANCERY. THE RSO ARGUED PERSUASIVELY THAT A 45 MINUTE ONE-WAY RESPONSE TIME (MUCH LESS THE HOUR AND ONE-HALF REQUIRED TO ROUND TRIP A USG VEHICLE) TO REINFORCE THE TWO ONE-MAN UNCLASSIFIED

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CHANCERY POSTS CANNOT BE TOLERATED IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRENT

GENERAL THREAT OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY DIRECTED TOWARD USG
INSTALLATIONS.

OUR SEARCH REVEALED THAT HOUSES OF ADEQUATE SIZE IN OR NEAR THE CENTRAL CITY AREA ARE SCARCE. MOST LARGE RESIDENTIAL UNITS ARE BEING DEMOLISHED TO PERMIT CONSTRUCTION OF COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS ON HIGHLY-VALUED LAND. WE HAVE RAISED WITH FBO, INFORMALLY IN CONVERSATION AND BY LETTER, THE POSSIBILITY OF BUILDING (OR HAVING BUILT FOR LONG-TERM LEASE) A USG-DESIGNED MARINE GUARD HOUSE. NOW, HOWEVER, THE NEED TO ACCOMMODATE TWO ADDITIONAL MEN WITHIN A MATTER OF MONTHS APPEARS TO FORECLOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF WAITING FOR THE COMPLETION OF A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, NOT TO MENTION THE OPERATIONAL RISKS INVOLVED IN A DECISION TO KEEP THE DETACHMENT AT ITS CURRENT DISTANCE FROM THE CHANCERY.

3. THIS TELEGRAM IS OCCASIONED BY THE FACT THAT WE HAVE, FOR A BRIEF TIME, THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE BY LEASE A HOUSE LOCATED 15 MINUTES BY CAR FROM THE CHANCERY WHICH IS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE THE ENLARGED DETACHMENT. THIS POSSIBILITY MERITS THE URGENT CONSIDERATION OF ARA AND FBO. THE HOUSE CONSISTS OF 6,988 SQUARE FEET OF CONSTRUCTION ON A LOT OF 9,675 SQUARE FEET. THERE ARE FIVE LARGE BEDROOMS (EACH OF WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE TWO MEN) AND THREE AND ONE-HALF BATHS IN THE MAIN SECTION OF THE HOUSE; TWO ADDITIONAL LARGE BEDROOMS AND FULL BATH ARE OVER THE GARAGE WHICH IS CONNECTED TO THE HOUSE. LIVING, DINING, AND RECREATION ROOMS, KITCHEN, PANTRIES, LAUNDRY AREA AND SERVANTS' QUARTERS ARE ALL APPROPRIATE TO SUPPORT A DETACHMENT OF AT LEAST 12 MEN. THERE IS ON-PROPERTY HARD-SURFACE PARKING FOR UP TO EIGHT VEHICLES. THE LOCATION IS ACCESSIBLE BY SEVERAL ROUTES AND PRESENTS NO SECURITY HAZARDS. THE PROPERTY IS WALLED AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S CHARACTER IS PRIMARILY UPPER-MIDDLE TO UPPER-CLASS RESIDENTIAL.

4. THE ASKING PRICE FOR THE PROPERTY IS 20,000 PESOS (\$1,601) PER MONTH AND THE OWNER IS WILLING TO TURN THE HOUSE OVER IN ESSENTIALLY LIKE-NEW CONDITION AT THAT PRICE. BASED ON SURROUNDING LAND VALUES, WE ESTIMATE SALE PRICE OF THE PROPERTY TO BE IN THE DOLLARS. 220,000 RANGE. THE COMMONLY EXPECTED MONTHLY RENTAL IS CALCULATED AT .075 PERCENT OF THE SALE PRICE - BY THAT STANDARD THE RENTAL PRICE IS WITHIN REASON. WE ESTIMATE THAT AN ADDITIONAL DOLLARS

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4,500 WOULD BE NEEDED TO ENSURE HOT WATER, AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS ADEQUATE TO HANDLE THE DETACHMENT'S REQUIREMENTS. THE OWNER IS WILLING TO DISCUSS A LEASE FOR TEN YEARS OR LONGER, AS LONG AS A REASONABLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT OVER SUCH AN EXTENDED TERM IS POSSIBLE. WE ESTIMATE 60-90 DAYS TO PREPARE HOUSE FOR OCCUPANCY.

5. THE CONTRACT ON THE CURRENT HOUSE IS FOR A BASIC FOUR-YEAR TERM FROM MAY 20, 1971 THROUGH MAY 19, 1975. MONTHLY RENTAL IS

13,750 PESOS (DOLLARS 1,100.88) AND USG IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR
800 PESOS (DOLLARS 64) MONTHLY COMMQLTY SERVICE CHARGE. THE

CONTRACT STIPULATES ANNUAL ADVANCE PAYMENTS IN RETURN FOR 5 PER-CENT DISCOUNT, WITH NEXT PAYMENT DUE ON MAY 19, 1974. WE HAVE HAD HIGHLY TENTATIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH LESSOR WHO RECALLS THAT USG WAS LESS THAN SATISFIED WITH LOCATION OF THE HOUSE WHEN CURRENT CONTRACT WAS SIGNED IN 1971. ESCALATING LAND VALUES IN NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE HOUSE IS LOCATED LEAD HIM TO BELIEVE THAT HE COULD OBTAIN BETTER RETURN BY SELLING LAND FOR ITS VALUE ALONE AND INVESTING PROCEEDS ELSEWHERE. WE BELIEVE WE HAVE A SOLID CHANCE OF NEGOTIATING OUR WAY OUT OF THE CONTRACT, BUT IN ORDER TO DEAL FROM STRENGTH, WE WOULD HAVE TO BEGIN, AND PROBABLY CONCLUDE, NEGOTIATION

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